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Despair and Disintegration: Why Are We So Blest?

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Abstract: *Why Are We So Blest?* explores the hard realities of the continent by means of a communal voice. It is a fictional representation of the conflicts and contradictions that define African situation providing an opportunity to study a confrontation between European and African patterns of thought. The confrontation is apparent in the initial confusion and disillusionment, followed by fragmentation, disintegration, with final emphasis on the consolidation of African identity. It is an attempt to probe the complex relation of colonizer and colonized; a relation which is seen as historically past but psychologically present in the Africans.

Index Terms – Colour disparity, Self-annihilation, Alienation, Racial Superiority.

I. INTRODUCTION

Why Are We So Blest? (1981) is a fictional recreation of the peculiar phenomenon of the exploited offering itself as an easy prey to the dehumanizing process set in motion by colonialism, a negation of hard-fought independence. It is an indictment of self-destructive streak of a group ethic and also exposes the destructive capabilities of the exploiters. The exploiters pose threat to the national consciousness because the colonialist tendencies are sure to raise its ugly head in postcolonial Africa. The contemporary world is "in a course of splitting process" (Gillard, "Narrative Situation and Ideology in Five Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah," *SPAN* 8) with colonial hangover still operative in every sphere of life.

The battle against colonialism is not a straight road going along the lines of nationalism. The native devotes his energies to end certain definite abuses like forced labour, corporal punishment, inequality of salaries, limitation of political rights, and many others. This fight for democracy, against oppression of mankind, lets the confusion of neo-liberal universalism to emerge slowly. "It so happens that the unpreparedness of educated ... the lack of practical links ... laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle ... give rise to tragic mishaps" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* 119).

II. THE OPPRESSOR AND THE OPPRESSED

Why Are We So Blest? is a brilliant and honest addition to the corpus of Black man's literary response to his voyage in the land of whites. Armah's handling of the theme of identity of the black travellers in the work indicates some connection between his own life abroad and the experiences of the two main black characters in the novel, thus confirming the view that "autobiography and fictional works are to a great extent so intimately linked as to be inseparable" (Durix, "Literary Autobiographical Literature?" *Ariel* 3). The writer's fury is embedded in the quest for self-realization which leads in every case to a crisis of identity within his protagonists.

The narrative of the text effectively captures the all-pervading sense of failure through three main protagonists - Solo Nakonam, Modin Dofu, and Aimee Reitsch. Solo's narrative is a commentary on the past, present, and future of Africa - the different slices of it are connected by a penetrating sense of gloom. The viewpoints of Modin and Aimee are corroborated by Solo who compiles the facts and views life that has been lived against the background of his own failure in the revolutionary struggle. Solo rearranges the pieces of the story together that have wide-ranging implications in personal as well as racial relationships. Within the framework of the interplay of these characters, Armah attempts to probe the relations of Africa and Europe.

Africa's contact with Europe had a debilitating effect on the native psyche. The clear cut demarcation between the white and the black, the oppressor and the oppressed, has social and psychological implications. The deadly repercussions of the psychological and sociological pressure are presented in protagonist Modin Dofu's fatal attraction for his white mistress, Aimee Reitsch. The consequent tragedy leaves him stranded at the bleakest dead-end of the desert setting it against the opposing image of spring water, "springwater flowing to the desert, where you flow there is no regeneration.... This is life's race, but how shall we remind a people hypnotized by death?" (Armah, *Two Thousand Seasons* xi).

III. LETHAL IMPACT OF WESTERN EDUCATION

Why Are We So Blest? is a remarkable indepth study of racial insults that black students are pitted against on American campuses in the 1960s. The belief that firmly holds the people of 1940s and 1950s Africa is that western education is a means for emancipating natives from the clutches of colonialism and other attendant problems of racial discrimination, economic exploitation, backwardness, and poverty. This notion about western education is still carrying strong streaks in the twenty first century as well. The result of this strong adherence to the western pattern of thought is seen in an increased enrolment of students in schools established by various colonizing powers, and an upsurge in the number of Blacks going overseas for higher education, commonly nicknamed 'the golden fleece.'

Modin Dofu, the controlling focus of Armah's novel, possesses the stuff of which tragedy is made, and that white racism merely provides the landscape for the conflict. Modin is a keen, perspective and an intelligent Ghanaian scholar, who pursues his study at Harvard, is a double exile in fact. He goes to America for higher studies where he is constantly reminded of his race and continent. Like Baako in *Fragments* (1981), he remains a loner in America and cannot identify himself with alien culture and suffers from an identity crisis. Though Baako and Modin, on first thought, seem to have made perfectly rational choices in the path they have opted to follow, however, their trips abroad prove futile journeys of lone revolutionaries.

Modin comes in search of knowledge from periphery to the centre. The search for knowledge does not yield desired results and becomes synonymous with alienation and loneliness. "The thirst for knowledge therefore becomes perverted into the desire for getting close to the alien ... Result: loneliness as the way of life" (32-33). This loneliness is an inevitable part of assimilationist African's life within the imperial structure and the "price ... is loneliness, separation from home, the constant necessity to adjust to what is alien, eccentric to the self" (33). Those that stay at periphery, intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, totally are not lonely; they are in touch with home, not cut off. The price they pay for not being lonely, however, is the crudest form of manipulation, mystification and planned ignorance.

The aloofness associated with Modin is not only in his being a numerical minority but more starkly by his presence in a world where he is constantly ignored or maligned. His detachment forms part of the strategy to debunk the view that acculturation is mainly a problem of an African who goes to America for his education. He considers his education to be a hurdle for his estrangement which is elevating due to his inability to communicate with his own people back home. Undoubtedly his white friends try to make him feel "all special on account of being with them" (121) by calling him "unique" and "unusually intelligent" (120), yet Modin's sense of alienation increases through their words and actions, considering the words as hardcore elements of satire portrayed against him in form of racial inferiority.

The black students' problems are often aggravated by real lack of funds, an absence of financial freedom that directly land them at the mercy of white benefactors. The same was the tale of this intelligent lad, who eventually gets financial support from Mr. Richmond Oppenhardt, the Chairman of the African Committee. Oppenhardt treats Modin as a pauper and obliged him only to pay back the generosity of his guardian with obedience and humility. The Chairman has special praise for Modin's academic record, hoping a bright future for him in America, "you are a most unusually intelligent African - the most intelligent, as a matter of fact.... Don't ever apologize for that. You have earned everything ... you'll continue to earn even more" (120). The consideration of being unusually intelligent chap is a rarity "[a] rarity to keep the blest entertained" (101). The white scholars emphasize on his uniqueness, indicating that he is special only because of their blessings. He sees through their words, but still imagines they are his well-wishers and friends.

Richmond Oppenhardt sponsors Modin's studies, Modin is also happy to have a scholarship from a friend. On the other hand, Oppenhardt is deadly against accepting all Africans as intelligent ones and turns into "an angry white man" (128) who cannot expect and digest arguments from an African. Consequently Modin realizes that Oppenhardt wants to buy obedience not friendship and resultantly, Modin refuses sponsorship. But, Professor Jefferson is greatly worried for the black lad for he "had done a ... destructive thing" (129) and advises him to tender an apology.

Modin, however, is quite determined now not to lick the shoes of the white masters who are merely using the oppressed race as a puppet in hands to entertain them. In fact, the rejection of this manifest destruction should have taken place early in his academic career in America. The tragedy is that the ripeness never comes when it is needed and now it is too late as Modin can neither translate his ideology into action nor can he remain attached to the place where he is best known by his colour and race and not by his individuality. This nagging question of identity makes him in effect a double exile.

The break with Oppenhardt was critical, though Modin had done it naturally. It was not riches he feared, not Oppenhardt's glut of possessions he feared, but the urge to isolate himself, to cut himself from where he came, forget his origins and "make the thinly glided present all ... history. That urging was seductive because [of] my own pain and the social pain of being an African" (162). The ease of the present reinforces the repulsion of past, making the present offered identity far easier to accept, but with the knowledge of it being destructive posing innumerable threats. While leaving home Modin had imagined going away would make him think of things to come in future but it is past that fills his mind and every "journey in this way becomes a return, another visit into ... self" (75).

Eventually, Naita, Modin's black girlfriend's words prove to be true, who bluntly tells Modin that there is no possibility of friendship with whites. "You think white folks can be your friends ... You're smart enough to see through their jive, but ... go on trusting them" (123). Don't ever think that white folks can be your friends, if you can use them good luck, but don't get involved. "There's nothing like friendship possible between us and ..them. You get involved with them, you're just dumb, that's all" (123).

Even Naita's assessment about the educated Africans turns to be perfectly true too. She states that "the Westernised African successes are contemptible worms.... Happy to get the degrees, then go home and relax on the shoulders of our sold people. The end of a Western education is not work but self-indulgence. An education for worms and slugs" (161). Here there is no knowledge, no scope of sharing, as everybody is hankering after personal privilege, greedy to consume more privileges to set him above, apart from others. "No sharing, but the same struggle for privilege ... Here privilege meant life, immediate survival; at the other end, men filled with hope came to fight for life, and unprotected, found a stupid death" (114-115).

The temptation of personal vocation compels one to be selfish, otherwise how "any son of the land ... could do such a great disservice ... so callously mutilate the embryo of the future country in the pursuit of personal vocation" (13). What is ordained cannot be escaped, if this process of turning the assimilated African into "an eater of crumbs in the house of slavery" (84) is not averted well in time.

IV. DEVASTATING RELATIONSHIP

Modin now wants to take revenge on the whites but the path he chooses is a path of self-annihilation. Naita once again warns him against such misadventures in the initial stage itself. The piercing sense of alienation forces Modin to seek companionship in sexual

encounters with white women, though he knows there is "no contact possible" (11). The "contact" is in the guise of love but it is "dangerous disease" (61) that has "a destructive wildness" (62), "an epidemic hit" (94).

Aimee's friendship with Modin signifies her search for the exotic, she is portrayed both as an individual and as a representative of her race, colour, and continent, "an object ... powerfully hurled against ... from the barrel of ... destructive culture" (115). The first meeting of Modin with Aimee is an indication of the things in store for him. They meet in a "Psycho Lab" (168) where thresholds of pain are measured on a pain recorder. Modin records a normal of seven to eight points while Aimee records a high of thirteen points much to the surprise of all. Outside the lab, Aimee shows unusual interest in him, who himself is desperate to come out of his loneliness, offers himself as an easy prey. She completely overpowers him and her voice prevails all the way. The alienation of Modin is, thus, diligently portrayed as a part of cultural hegemony that the whites earnestly sought to impose.

Aimee's psychological superiority over Modin is an extension of this cultural supremacy. The cultural dichotomy and racial hiatus are so strong in this association that "two people, so different, yet so willfully assimilated ... an acute case of love" (59). Modin selects Aimee, an instrument of destruction, as a companion "thinking she brought him love" (207) remaining a mute witness while being carried away by his self-consuming streak. Aimee's interest in Modin is, like her revolutionary fervour, part of her search for new sensations which guided her to undertake a visit to an East African country - "Kansa" (143) to find fire, if fire is left anywhere that is the place.

To pursue this fatal journey, Aimee starts from Vilima city, the easiest place to meet the big shots like Bombo Pakansa. Her prime motto was to endanger "the project by sleeping around with Africans" (144) and in the guise of this murderous motto she opted for a project on "Moja Moja" (177) leadership wherein she wants to trap the renowned black leader "to talk about matters touching the roots of ... people's existence here" (37). In search of information Aimee sleeps with various leaders of Moja Moja rising and subsequently with the President of the Nationalist Government. Finally she got a chance to meet Bombo Pakansa and was very excited about the meeting, but turns highly disappointed: "Hell, here am I just about to get laid by a head of the state. That made me laugh. He thought I was laughing at him.... I'll teach you how to fuck properly" (145). The episode is significant because it portrays the depravity of the postcolonial political structures and the morbid search of the Europeans for the exotic in black Africa. The African leadership only promises "the magic promises of hope" (54) and behind "the proud exteriors our leaders carry around anything but the African helplessness of their followers" (51).

The ancient white hatred of Africa is projected through Aimee, a female wolf whose axis of life is sex. She is one of the white destroyers who "use the accumulated energy within ... black selves to do work of importance to their white selves" (208). The sexual neurosis is so overpowering in her that ultimately all her contact with fellow human beings, whether Africans or whites, her professors or African heads of state, acquire a sexual interpretation. Her exotic adventure in the name of "Operation African Junction" (143) also ends in failure. Aimee's life in the text can be summarized as an adventure in sex, an open experiment with the self, identifying with the "Sisyphus situation" (185) in sexual connotations.

This sexual adventure attains hallucinatory proportions in a fantasized incestuous relationship where Aimee sees herself as the wife of her own uncle and also through master-slave relationship wherein this deadly female considers Modin to be her sex-slave. But Armah has subverted the myth of sex-hungry African women so widely propagated by the Americans to defend their sexual exploitation of the black slave women through Aimee, a sex-starved neurotic. She is sick and nobody knows this fact better than she does. She fantasises while with Modin: "Yeesss ... Move, Mwangi! Don't stop!" (198). The sheer unexpectedness of that name makes Modin halt and the sound of that name would not go down. He asks her if she wants him to be a Mwangi for her, she confesses that she's "a sucker" (199) and is confirmed in her supposition that now she will be regarded a monster by Modin. She accepts her weakness openly and sees nothing wrong in using people for her purpose or for fantasizing if it can provide the desired effect to fill vacuum in her life. Modin bluntly tells her: "You are sick. If what you need is ... strange stimulation ... you should remain frigid" (215).

Modin is instrumental in bringing back her womanliness. In her first sexual encounter with Modin, Aimee finds him no different from others; she gradually exploits him to shake off her frigidity to become her own normal self. The realization that he can be an effective weapon in regaining her womanliness prompts her not to lose him, therefore, she becomes all the more overbearing. In bed with him, she imagines herself a memsahib whose husband, a repressive colonial administrator, comes home to find her making love with a houseboy. This kind of fantasizing arouses her and she derives sexual satisfaction from such weird fantasies. "I was another rare creature, an African vehicle to help ... reach the strange destination of ... souls" (167). She needs no closeness to another human, what she craves is the nearness of danger, and association with an African is bound to bring danger in time. Thus, exploitation is both physical and psychological, and the racial divide is pertinently manifest in personal relations too.

Aimee has a domineering personality and Modin shivers under her impact. He proves no match for her aggressive drive who launches an uninhibited and multi-pronged assault on his personality by fully exploiting his psychological disadvantages without qualms. "She is portrayed as being true to herself in selecting a prey, exploiting it to the last drop and finally letting destruction overpower her victim" (Rao, K. Damodar, *The Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah* 81). There is "so much destructiveness caught in everything she said, everything she did, the way she moved, the tenor of her being" (149) that Solo fails to perceive the reason for Modin's passive acceptance: "Why did he let her destroy him? ... love, but that is an answer for fools" (149). "She played at love; her aim was survival, not union ... a possessor of the experience, not its victim" (232). Moreover there is no love between them and if there is any love it is not "a fusion of two beings, but ... a confusion of the loving ego" (261).

Fanon's exposition of colonial experience in psychological terms has a definite bearing on Modin-Aimee relationship. According to him, the biological aspect is the immediate and inescapable element, and the racialist ideology uses it as its starting point of exploitation. Among the multitude clichés mobilized against the Negro, the sexual aspect takes on a special significance because one attributes the Negro with an abnormal sexual potency bordering on the perverse. Fanon opines: "It is in his corporeality that the Negro is attacked. It is as a concrete personality that he is lynched" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 163). Fanon corroborates his thesis by his experiences as a practicing psychiatrist, he postulates that in all cases of Negrophobia, patients' sex life is found to be abnormal. Modin's contact with Aimee initiates the process of Modin's destruction to a fatal end, owing to socio-psychological factors.

Fanon rightly calls colonised man the "prisoner of an unbearable insularity," being handicapped in establishing contacts with his environment because of his complexes and feelings of insecurity. Fanon observes that in the man of colour there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence, because whenever "a man of colour protests, there is alienation" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 60). His attempts to find a way out of the alienation inevitably lands him in the white world and inter racial sexual contacts seems the only solution to his problems, though secretly. The man of colour takes revenge on the colonial master by "having a sexual relation with a white woman ... and at the same time proves that he is equal, a member of the human race" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 81) and tries to get solace for his bruised psyche.

It is an established truth that the disparity between the whites and the blacks is inevitable and is a sufficient cause for overwhelming loneliness and isolation. Isolation offers false solutions, like the opportunities to surround the lonely self with things, to ease the immediate sharpness of aloneness with things that in the end "cut you off farther, things to lead your life energies ... away from life.... a call to suicide" (207). By the time the reality dawns, it is already too late.

Thus, it can be reiterated that not only involvement with whites is destructive so is withdrawal and nothing can be done in this dead territory. There is no point in absorbing loneliness till it's time to go home: "I must contain my loneliness while I'm here. But why in fact remain?" (157). In this destructiveness, greed, climb after privilege and degrees obstruct the way back home, rendering a man completely impotent to act. Destroyers they have always been and their mission has been destruction and destruction only. There have been centuries of purposeful destruction and now here are new generations of children "born to destroy effortlessly ... easier than they breathe" (150). These are the daughters of destroyers and they make the isolate sufferers forget entirely where they come from and "what has been done to ... [them] Destroyers they have always been" (149). The so-called love with a daughter of a race of destroyers implies to embrace destroyers only. This love too is the "same ancient call of death, mine, his, the death of our people, guilt with all the sweetness of the force itself of life, affection" (150). This deadly call of love compels all to jump, dance and race, so as to get consumed by alien destructive strategy.

V. THE ULTIMATE ANNIHILATION

The artist-searcher for truth and meaning - Solo, laments his dilemma and carries with him "the burden of ideological schism" (Gillard, "Narrative Situation and Ideology in Five Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah," *SPAN* 4) and the burden of the twin failure of his own past and the burden of African past. His experiences of total helplessness make him feel that even before his death he has "become a ghost, wandering about the face of the earth, moving with a freedom ... not chosen" (11). He works as a translator in the People's Union of Congheria, seat of the government in exile. His failure in the revolutionary struggle fills him with despair and desolation. Though the reasons for his failure are not specified, it is through the bits and pieces of his reminiscences, the nature of the revolutionary struggle can be deduced.

In the sordid scheme of things Solo considers himself to be a misfit. The corrupting and hypocritical influences that characterized the revolutionary struggle are being perpetuated in post-independent Africa. Solo's apprehensions about the dangers involved in the relationship with the whites are reinforced by the speedy destruction of Modin, for he considers Aimee to be a potent product of the destructive culture. He is pained for Modin who fails to see Aimee as a manifestation of the greed of her race and culture, and not as an individual in flesh and blood. The overwhelming sense of guilt troubles Solo for doing nothing significant to avert Modin's tragedy. Thus, he remains a mute witness to an unending torture going on, "yet to have lost all sense of destination" (54) in the ongoing process of sustained disintegration. Solo is reminded of his "student days in Lisbon" (48) bringing back the memory of his own relationship with Sylvia - a Portuguese which comes to an end for racial reasons only.

Solo initially treats Bureau of The People's Union of Congheria (UPC) at Laccryville as the revolutionary place but soon he is disillusioned by all "that was ... around me" (49). In the Bureau there are usually two persons - Jorge Manuel and Esteban Ngulo. Jorge Manuel is half Portuguese, has a university education in Lisbon and Esteban Ngulo sans university education, give the impression of "brothers co-operating in the long fight for our country's freedom" (51) but the post-revolutionary disillusionment is tellingly brought out in the running of People's Union of Congheria itself. Solo soon perceives the division exists between the two, Jorge Manuel and Esteban Ngulo, "the mulatto and the dark, silent African" (51), the lighter brother drank spirits upstairs with suave travelers, while down below the black one licked the tasteless backs of stamps. Solo prefers to call them "man and his shadow" (52) indicating that a division would exist even when the last of Portuguese had left Congheria: Ngulo will remain a clerk while Jorge Manuel would usurp "the credit and the sweetness" (52) of country's freedom. All the slogans and the dreams of inequality and justice will dissolve into an endless procession of masters and servants. Thus, Solo finds "inequalities within the struggle to end inequality ... inequities tending to justice are better ... than injustice feeding existing injustice" (115). In Laccryville, the revolt is over and the survivors are content "with their masters' hypocritical honors" (115) and a peace indistinguishable from triviality has descended upon the place.

To pursue her deadly mission, Aimee along with Modin visit UPC for enrollment to participate in the revolutionary struggle. They are told to wait and wait without result. The persons-in-charge of the People's Union of Congheria try to dissuade and actually prevent them from joining the scene of struggle. They are aware that the two have read everything, without understanding anything. They tell the couple that they would be out of place there, for the "battlefield is not a place for intellectuals" (252).

Solo, who is a witness to the ensuing discussion between Jorge Manuel and Esteban Ngulo, knows that the couple would be kept waiting for decision indefinitely to the point of desperation. Ngulo is angry with Modin for his involvement with Aimee, for him their love is a "fusion, confusion, of the self with an other self.... How indeed, except through confusion, could that African soul love an American?" (139). Ngulo fails to perceive "what does it mean for him to be an African if he does not know the Europeans have been trying to wipe us off the earth these many centuries?" (254) and this foolish man has started the fight by falling in love with a European. He informs: "Senor ... this is the Bureau of the UPC.... not the Salvation Army.... revolution is not the same thing as suicide" (255). Modin is one of those intellectuals who want to die but he should have courage to do it himself. He can't come to us "looking for an instrument of death" (255). Solo aptly answers that Modin needs no instrument of death, he has already found one in Aimee, a fitting comment on the devouring spirit of Aimee. Jorge Manuel believes that "an African in love with a European is a pure slave. Not a man accidentally enslaved. A pure slave, with the heart of a slave, with the spirit of a slave" (255), and he firmly believes Bureau does not need slaves.

The frequent visits and repeated attempts of the duo fail to get permission from the office of the UPC. Solo offers them shelter in his house when they run out of money, fully aware that they will never ever get permission. Aimee flatly refuses his offer, prefers to stay in the filthy hotel which she terms as revolutionary. In her perception, like all Americans "revolution is the same thing as filth" (261). What she wants is a feel of it, a drenching and thorough experience of filth and revolution. In her smugness she has "ability to look down on ... [Solo] while yet dependent" (140) on him, and dares to despise him. She pays no heed to Modin's wishes and continues with her adventure. Solo experiences Aimee's sadistic streak as well as Modin's eerie sense of insecurity and helplessness, apparent in his looks, coming from the "depths of ages and ages of sadness" (59).

Jorge Manuel informs Modin that there are no positions in the leadership and Bureau cannot allow them to participate. The isolation and spiritual disintegration forces Modin to opt for a way out which is appalling in its very nature. In fact, he had already accepted the inevitability of his disintegration and he was just waiting for the final moment. At such a moment, Aimee shows him the way to death and destruction, preserving herself for hotter pursuits. Aimee gives the lead while Modin remains a mute follower in this "self-consuming adventure of orgy and violence" (Rao, K. Damodar, *The Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah* 82).

The sadistic streak in Aimee provokes her to take part in the revolutionary struggle whatever may be the scene. The patience of the duo subsequently gives way and as a last resort Aimee and Modin undertake the journey that proves fatal. Modin is an unwilling partner in this death-bound journey to the forest that was under the control of the French army. "The soldiers had the look of beasts of prey cheated of their prey but still eyeing him" (275). The European soldiers rule the desert and the frustration in their eyes has become "hostile come-on attitude" (276). Modin's deep-rooted psychological subjugation and Aimee's aggressive experimentation with sexual encounters now reach at its culmination. All along the journey Modin is nagged by the doubt that he is treading a dangerous path, whenever he gives vent to his feelings he is snubbed by Aimee for being "paranoid" and "bourgeois" (283) in his thoughts. Modin admits that he has seen her sickness before, but has never been afraid. The newspaper picture of the "Boston girl who cut off her man friend's testicles with a nail clipper, put them in her handbag, then tried to disappear southward, into the South American hinterland" (276) has filled him with fear now. The invitation in the eyes of soldiers is not simply hostile but portrays "a sense of being irresistibly pulled toward something decisive, the pull growing stronger as we go deeper into the desert" (277).

They pursue their journey in the desert aimlessly until they reach Ouasnia and meet a friendly policeman, who asks: "You have something important to do" (278) in the desert and in answer Aimee laughs only. Modin does not want to continue with the journey, having a deep longing to go back into the soft "padded embrace of the blest" (235). They are "halfway across the Sahara by now ... wants to go the bourgeois way.... a boat back home" (283). They meet the Army Personnel in a jeep who are on patrol, they offer them ride, Modin refuses rides saying the guys are racists. Aimee is shocked to hear him "using the black and white thing as an excuse" (283) but she attributes this to his deterioration of health, and decides to find ways of bringing him back on track once the crossing of Sahara is over, but that never happens in reality.

The colour disparity of the couple and Aimee's decision to respect Modin more than him accentuates the sadistic tendencies of army personnel. The driver shouts it is impolite to refuse twice, they grab Modin, get his arms behind his back and three of them sit with him at the back, while Aimee is in the front. In a sandy area, they break his left elbow and his arm hangs loose. They undress Modin, tie him "to the back of the jeep, straight up and naked" (285), humiliate him, arouse him, cut his male organ and leave him in the desert to die, their actions cross the limits of barbarism.

Aimee does not feel the pinch of his suffering, as she is engrossed in her own lustful thoughts of not having made a final contact with the already dazed, bleeding Modin. The sadism turns Modin into an object, a plaything to gratify the sense of a bulldozing superiority and an instrument to satisfy the insatiable lust of Aimee. The white Army Personnel leave Aimee near Laccryville. Throughout the journey death looms large, creates a chilling effect while the "actual death crescendo" (285-288) turns out to be one of the most horrific in modern literature.

VI. CONCLUSION

Fanon postulates that the hatred of the whites against the Negroes stems from a feeling of sexual inferiority. The brutal way in which Modin is murdered by the white army personnel has psychological implications propounded by Fanon. Consequently, the lynching of a Negro would have to be interpreted as sexual revenge. Fanon, in fact, interprets racism as the protection of the civilized white man's irrational longing for the lost paradise of sexual license onto the Negro: "Projecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves as if the Negro really had them" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 165). In the context of Fanon's stratagem of approaching colonial, neocolonial structures, Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* proves a befitting statement.

Modin, an "African rarity to keep the blest entertained" (101), a genius at work and "nobody's plaything" (101), considers his own life as an off-shot of the collective predicament. He ardently believes in the real, workable system, the "indispensable maji" (221) - that special something Africans need to neutralize the material destructiveness of Europe - "an antidote to the potent poison of European penetration" (222). The revolutionary ideal is an actual, working egalitarian society. The war against the invader is to be the educational process for creating new anti-European society.

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